



DIOCESE OF LONDON



December 2, 2022

Update on the former St. Peter's School building (Cathedral Parish Centre)

To all parishioners of St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica:

For the past 17 years, St. Peter's Cathedral has been in partnership with the Diocese of London for use of the former St. Peter's School, owned by the Diocese, for the offices and Parish Centre after the former rectory that sat on the corner of Dufferin Ave & Clarence St. had to be demolished. This partnership was not intended to be a permanent solution, but a temporary measure with hopes of rebuilding a new Parish Centre within five years.

The Memorandum of Agreement in 2005 signed by St. Peter's & the Diocese provided the parish a place for offices and a Parish Centre, with St. Peter's paying yearly rent and being responsible for all utilities, repairs, and any capital expenses. St. Peter's also agreed to manage the North parking lot and the Diocese paid the parish to do so. Over the years, St. Peter's took on tenants and other rentals to help offset all the expenses incurred in the areas they were responsible for.

As time passed since that initial agreement, it was not feasible to embark on building a new parish centre; either to replicate in some manner the former structure of the rectory or build a new centre. The partnership with the Diocese has continued over the years. Beginning in the early 2000's, the Cathedral and Diocese equally funded the replacement of the roof, masonry repairs, new plaster on the east and west walls, and the installation of tie rods (cables) high in the ceiling of the Cathedral. Over the years sacristy and Chapel repairs, new boiler system, continued upkeep of the organ, new kneelers, fleche repairs, lighting, and sound system upgrades have been completed by the Cathedral. All of this could not be accomplished without the generous support of the St. Peter's parish community.

Seventeen years later, brings us to the present, and a time for both St. Peter's and the Diocese of London to reassess both our financial and pastoral priorities. St. Peter's has a beautiful 137- year-old building that is in continual need of repair and upkeep. We have walls unpainted and damaged walls from previous roof leaks, outdated colour scheme, pews that need repair and refinishing, etc. The Parish Centre, though it has provided to us a place for offices and meeting space for our ministries and committees to meet, lacks much in meeting the needs of the parish community.

Pastorally, St. Peter's has now entered into the Family of Parishes model, bringing 2 or more parishes together where the Bishop has visioned to build vibrant communities of faith. As good stewards of our resources, both financially and pastorally, it was announced last month that one office for the London North Central Catholic Family of Parishes would open in one location at St. Michael's Parish on December 1.

Through dialogue with the Diocese for the past 5 months, it has been determined the Parish Centre will be set for demolition in 2023. Future plans by the Diocese for the entire school property and north parking lot have not yet been determined. The five current tenants have now been notified and their leases will be terminated at the end of January and March. The Diocese will soon be soliciting quotes for asbestos removal and demolition. There is also a required approval process with the City of London.

Until such time, all the ministries and committees will continue to use the parish centre and a new financial agreement with the Diocese on rent and utilities has been negotiated. The management of the North parking lot will return to the Diocese.

Though this may come as unsettling news to some, know that as we enter the Advent Season, a time of hope, we want what is financially and pastorally responsible and viable for our parish community. The celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments continues, and the tireless work of the many ministries and committees will move forward uninterrupted. Discussions have already begun and will continue in the new year with all the parish ministry and committee heads to assess the needs of the groups that currently use the parish centre and look at alternate space at other venues or the facilities in the Family of Parishes.

Please continue to pray as we discern our future plans at St. Peter's Cathedral and the London North Central Catholic Family of Parishes.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at basilica@dol.ca.



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